

**STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE TOM BLILEY
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT**

APRIL 30, 1997

**HEARING ON MEDICAL DEVICES:
TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND
PATIENT/PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES**

**I AM PLEASED WE ARE HAVING THIS HEARING ON MEDICAL
DEVICES AND THEIR ROLE IN IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND
EXTENDING THE LIVES OF AMERICAN PATIENTS.**

**AS WE WILL HEAR TODAY, THE MEDICAL DEVICE SECTOR OF
OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS AN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY.
TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY FAR SURPASSES ANYTHING THAT EVEN
THE MOST OPTIMISTIC AMONG US COULD HAVE EVER
PREDICTED JUST 10 YEARS AGO.**

**MEDICAL DEVICES HAVE GREATLY IMPROVED OUR ABILITY
TO PREVENT, DETECT, AND TREAT A BROAD RANGE OF HEALTH
CARE NEEDS. AND THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DRAMATICALLY
REDUCING THE SUFFERING OF MILLIONS OF PATIENTS.**

AT THE SAME TIME, THE MEDICAL DEVICE INDUSTRY HAS SHOWN US THAT AMERICAN INGENUITY IS ALIVE AND WELL -- AND, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, LIVING IN SMALL BUSINESSES NATIONWIDE.

TODAY'S MEDICAL DEVICE INDUSTRY CONSISTS OF ROUGHLY 8,000 COMPANIES -- 80 PERCENT OF WHICH EMPLOY FEWER THAN 50 PEOPLE. ALL TOLD, THESE FIRMS EMPLOY 300,000 PEOPLE AND GENERATE \$44 BILLION IN ANNUAL SALES.

JUST AS IMPORTANT, THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE MEDICAL DEVICES KEEP AMERICA COMPETITIVE BY INVESTING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN CRITICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE RESULT? WORLD-CLASS TECHNOLOGIES THAT MAKE LOWER-COST, LESS-INVASIVE, AND MORE EFFECTIVE MEDICAL PROCEDURES POSSIBLE. AND THE CLEAR BENEFICIARIES ARE AMERICA'S PATIENTS.

WHILE THIS HEARING IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE MEMBERS WITH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ADVANCES IN MEDICAL DEVICE TECHNOLOGY, THE SHEER SCOPE OF THESE CHANGES MAKES A CRITICAL POINT ABOUT THE ROLE GOVERNMENT MUST PLAY IN THIS FIELD.

WE MUST DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT SAFE AND EFFECTIVE MEDICAL DEVICES GET TO THE PATIENTS AND PHYSICIANS WHO NEED THEM.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE TIME AND EFFORT OF THE WITNESSES WHO ARE JOINING US TODAY. AND I CONGRATULATE CHAIRMAN BILIRAKIS FOR HOLDING THIS INFORMATIVE AND TIMELY HEARING.